

E: CMO@gov.scot

Dear Colleague,

MANAGEMENT OF POST-VACCINATION FEVER

This is an updated version of the email that was issued by DCMO on 28 September 2020. An update to the guidance given in that email is provided below in **yellow**.

We have started one of our biggest flu vaccination campaigns in Scotland. A number of NHS Boards have requested guidance on how to manage children and adults who develop fever following vaccination. Clearly, managing fever that develops following vaccination is nothing new to front-line clinicians, but during the current pandemic with fever being one of the symptoms associated with COVID-19, it is critical that the way we manage fever post-vaccination is consistent and appropriate in all settings.

You may already be aware of the Public Health England guidance¹ approved via the UK-wide Flu Vaccination Programme Board as below:

Vaccinated individuals, parents and carers should be advised that flu vaccines may cause a mild fever which usually resolves within 48 hours. This is a common, expected reaction and isolation is not required unless COVID-19 is suspected.

Feeling generally unwell, shivery, achy and tired are also commonly reported symptoms following flu vaccination. These symptoms usually disappear within one to two days without treatment but paracetamol can be given if necessary to relieve any of these symptoms.

As has always been recommended, any fever after vaccination should be monitored and if individuals, parents or carers are concerned about their, or their child's health at any time, they should seek advice from their GP or NHS 111.

From the Interim Chief Medical Officer
Dr Gregor Smith

22 October 2020

SGHD/CMO(2020)30

For action

NHS Boards Chief Executives,
NHS Boards Medical Directors,
NHS Boards Primary Care Leads,
NHS Boards Directors of Nursing & Midwifery,
NHS Boards Chief Officers of Integration Authorities
Directors of Pharmacy
Directors of Public Health
General Practitioners
Practice Nurses
Health Visitors
Immunisation Co-ordinators
CPHMs
Occupational Health Leads
NHS 24

For information

NHS Board chairs
Public Health Scotland
Scottish Government Clinical Guidance Cell
Scottish Government Professional Advisory Group
Infectious Disease Consultants
Consultant Physicians
HPS Liaison, Scottish Government

Further Enquiries to:

Policy Issues

Vaccination Policy Team
immunisationprogrammes@gov.scot

Medical Issues

Dr Syed Ahmed
St Andrew's House
syed.ahmed@gov.scot

¹ Available online at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/917251/Inactivated_influenza_vaccine-information_for_healthcare_practitioners_2020_to_2021.pdf

In addition to the above, we have now drafted advice for use in Scotland that has been agreed by the COVID-19 Clinical Cell in Scotland and approved by me:

If someone develops fever post vaccination, this would normally be within the first 48 hours following vaccination AND usually resolve within 48 hours. This is a relatively common, expected reaction, and self-isolation and testing for COVID-19 are not required unless COVID is suspected based on other clinical criteria such as cough and/or anosmia.

If fever starts beyond 48 hours post vaccination OR persists beyond 48 hours or an individual develops other COVID-19 related symptoms, then they should self-isolate and be recommended to have a test for COVID-19. Testing for COVID-19 may also be considered at any time following clinical assessment, or if there are other epidemiological indications such as being a close contact of a case or part of a cluster.

Yours sincerely

Gregor Smith

Dr Gregor Smith
Interim Chief Medical Officer